

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5919

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

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SUBJ: PAKISTANI REACTION TO POSSIBLE CHANGES IN INDIAN KASHMIR

REF: ISLAMABAD 6710

SUMMARY: GOP IS PRESSING MAJOR PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTICIPATED CHANGE IN STATUS OF INDIAN KASHMIR, INCLUDING SHAPR PERSONAL CRITICISM OF KASHMIRI LEADER SHEIKH ABDULLAH. MINSTATE AZIZ AHMED HAS SPOKEN ON SUBJECT IN SEVERAL RECENT STATEMENTS AND IT WAS MAJOR THEME OF AZAD KASHMIR CELEBRATION DURING JULY 19 STATE HOLDIAY. GOP SOKESMEN HAVE, HOWEVER, EXPLICITLY RENOUNCED USE OF FORCE BY PAKISTAN IN KASHMIR. END SUMMARY.

1. REFLECTING ITS CONCERN OVER REPORTED CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN INDIANS AND SHEIKH ABDULLAH, GOP HAS MOUNTED MAJOR PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHANGE IN STATUS OF INDIAN KASHMIR. PAK PRESS HAS CARRIED FREQUENT ARTICLES SELECTIVELY CULLED
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FROM WORLD PRESS REPORTING CLASHES IN SRINIGAR AND SUGGESTING

THAT PRO-PAKISTANI AWAMI ACTION COMMITTEE ENJOYS WIDESPREAD KASHMIRI SUPPORT. ABDULLAH HIMSELF HAS COME IN FOR ESPECIALLY SHARP CRITICISM. NUMBER OF EDITORIALS AND FEATURE ARTICLES HAVE DENOUNCED HIM AS LACKEY OF INDIANS AND CHRONICLED HIS ALLEGED HISTORY OF BETRAYAL OF MUSLIM CAUSE.

2. SINCE JULY 10 STATEMENT SUPPORTING KASHMIRI DEMAND FOR SELF-DETERMINATION (REFTEL, MINSTATE AZIZ AHMED HAS TOUCHED ON THIS THEME IN AT LEAST THREE PUBLIC SPEECHES. HE HAS PRESSED ARGUMENT THAT PLEBISCITE FRONT AND GOI CANNOT "BARGAIN AWAY" FUTURE OF KASHMIR WITHOUT CONSULTING KASHMIRI PEOPLE AND PAKISTAN, AND HAS CONDEMNED ABDULLAH FOR ALLEGED SELL-OUT IN RETURN FOR PROMISE OF CHIEF MINISTERSHIP.

3. CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARY OF 1947 MUSLIM LEAGUE RESOLUTION ON ACCESSION OF KASHMIR TO PAKISTAN, AZAD KASHMIR (AK) LEADERS HELD SERIES OF ANNIVERSARY MEETINGS AND RALLIES ON JULY 19. AK PRESIDENT QAYYUM KHAN AND LEADERS OF OTHER AK POLITICAL PARTIES SPOKE TO LARGE BOISTEROUS CROWD IN MUZAFFARABAD, REITERATING TRADITIONAL DEMAND FOR PLEBISCITE AND CONDEMNING FRONT'S ALLEGED ENDORSEMENT OF MERGER BETWEEN INDIAN AND AZAD KASHMIR.

4. IN INDIRECT SWIPE AT GOP QAYYUM ASKED THAT KASHMIRIS THEMSELVES BE PERMITTED TO "DEAL WITH KAFIRS IN OCCUPIED KASHMIR" IF GOP FOUND THAT IT COULD NOT LIVE UP TO ITS "COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD LIVES AND RIGHTS OF KASHMIRI PEOPLE." ALL SPEAKERS AT RALLIES PRAISED FAROOQ'S AWAMI ACTION COMMITTEE AND APPEALED TO WORLD PUBLIC OPINION AND UN TO BLOCK CHANGE IN INDIAN KASHMIR STATUS. ALL AK SPEAKERS SEIZED OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING AZAD KASHMIR'S FUTURE STATUS IN PAKISTAN (ISLAMABAD A-97) AND APPEAL FOR VOTES IN UPCOMING FALL ELECTIONS.

5. IN APPARENT EFFORT TO KEEP LID ON SITUATION, GOP HAS BALANCED ITS STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION WITH CLEAR REJECTION OF USE OF FORCE. AZIZ AHMED'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT THAT GOP WAS BOUND UNDER SIMLA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGREEMENT TO PREVENT AZAD KASHMIRIS FROM CROSSING INTO INDIAN KASHMIR IN SUPPORT OF THEIR CO-RELIGIONISTS HAS ALREADY BEEN REPORTED (ISLAMABAD 7010). FOREIGN MINISTER AGHA SHAHI, CARRYING BHUTTO'S MESSAGE TO RALLY IN MUZAFFARABAD ON JULY 19 ACCESSION DAY, STRESSED THAT WHILE PAKISTAN WAS FULLY CAPABLE OF MEETING ANY CHALLENGE FROM INDIAN TROOPS, KASHMIR SETTLEMENT WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT CONFERENCE TABLE ALTHOUGH "IF INDIA TOOK ANY UNILATERAL DECISION THE ISSUE

CAN BE TAKEN TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL."

6. COMMENT: PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN REFLECTS FOLLOWING PAK CONCERNS OVER PROSPECT OF SETTLEMENT IN INDIAN KASHMIR: (A) LIKELIHOOD SETTLEMENT WOULD TEND UNDERCUT GOP'S LONG-STANDING POLITICAL/LEGAL STAND ON KASHMIR WHICH, IMPRACTICAL THOUGH IT MAY SEEM IN POST-1971 WORLD, IS STILL ARTICLE OF FAITH TO MANY PAKISTANIS; (B) FEAR THAT OPPOSITION WILL EXPLOIT TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL ADVANTAGE GOP'S INABILITY TO BLOCK SETTLEMENT; AND (C) WORRY OVER POSSIBLE EFFECT OF SETTLEMENT ON PEOPLE OF AZAD KASHMIR WHERE DEAL OFFERED INDIAN KASHMIRIS MIGHT SEEM ATTRACTIVE TO THIS CHRONICALLY DEPRESSED AREA. PAKS MAY ALSO BE CALCULATING THAT SHOW OF DEEP CONCERN AT THIS TIME MAY MARGINALLY IMPROVE GOP BARGAINING POSITION IN FUTURE. AT SAME TIME, WHILE WILLING TO CASTIGATE KASHMIRI LEADERS FOR CONSIDERING DEAL WITH INDIA, PAKS APPEAR ANXIOUS NOT AGGRAVATE SITUATION AND FURTHER HAMPER RETURN TO SIMLA PROCESS BY APPEARING TOO BELLIGERENT VIS-A-VIS INDIA. THUS THE WELCOME STATEMENTS SPECIFICALLY ESCHEWING FORCE.
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